

Series: **FROM ROOTS TO BRANCHES**

edited by

Félicie Affolter
Walter Bischofberger

PART IV

Tactual Social Interaction

I feel the others and interact with them

Affolter, F.

Bischofberger, W.

Flück, C.

Oreiller, M.-Cl.

Vulliamy, A.

ISBN 978-3-7883-1238-1

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www.neckar-verlag.de

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Print: BURGER(DRUCK GMBH 79183 Waldkirch www.burger-druck.de

Preface

This publication is based on a jubilee presentation of the APW (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Pro Wahrnehmung) in the Pfalz Keller zu St. Gallen 2015 for the 40th year of its existence.

Many people have helped to create this publication, for which we would like to thank them:

- The patients and their families.
- The parents of the healthy children, of whom video clips are included in the publication.
- Valerie Narducci and Catharina Laesslé for their collaboration in the revision of the French manuscript.
- Cornelia Hertel for the collaboration translating the manuscript into English.
- Virginie Oreiller for the illustrations as well as Romain Théoduloz and Melaine-Noé Laesslé for proof-reading the French manuscript.
- Ms. Edwige Ochsenbein and Alain Laesslé for the compilation of the videoclips and the production of the USB-sticks with a protection function for the publication of the book.
- And finally, Ms. R. Holtzhauer from Neckar-Verlag for her constant willingness to accept foreign language publications in their rehabilitation program (for the current publication there are printed versions in French and German) and Mrs. Klimmeck for the editorial support.

Dr. F. Affolter / Dr. W. Bischofberger

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Introduction

We live in an environment.

We assimilate constantly „something“ from this environment. This asks for actions. In order to make these actions successful they have to be accommodated to the momentary situation. These assimilations and accommodations change the environment and at the same time we change ourselves. Therefore, we speak of interactions.

Following PIAGET (1971) these interactions are the roots of evolution, of development and thereby also the roots of social development.

Social means „companionable“. We are not alone in an environment, we interact with parts of the environment, with living beings, but also with lifeless matter.

One important part of processes within this social environment is the communication among the elements of a social group.

In order that communication can develop in a certain situation, it needs a sender (S) who conveys something (sending) and a recipient (R) who receives something. The roles of sender and recipient are interchangeable.

In addition, information is necessary. In order that communication happens this information must be recognizable (perceivable) for sender as well as recipient.

Communication can be very simple or complex, we speak of different structures.

We distinguish two main groups of structures, those with signals and those with symbols. The structure of signals is a basic level of communication, that of symbols is more complex.

For our problem of application for people with severe limitations in social interactions the first group of structures, the one of signals, is especially important. Therefore, our discussion will focus on this group.